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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second Periodic Reports of States parties

Addendum

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

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PART I

General assessment of progress

In the Soviet Union, ensuring the de facto equality of women and enhancing their role in all areas of societal life is one of the State's most important tasks and a subject of constant concern on the part of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government.

The concept of the accelerated socio-economic development of Soviet society, elaborated by the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, includes the implementation of an active and comprehensive social policy aimed at improving the prosperity of the people, and embraces all aspects in the life of ordinary men and women - from their working and living conditions to their social, class and national relations. A social policy of this kind guarantees the genuine enjoyment by all citizens of the USSR - regardless of sex - of the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled under the Constitution and the law.

The principle of the equality of rights of women and men in all areas of economic, political and cultural life is legislatively anchored in article 35 of the Constitution of the USSR. The legislation also provides for a system of measures guaranteeing the practical observance of this principle. The implementation of the requirement of equal rights for women and men is ensured in the form of constitutionally mandated measures aimed at creating conditions to enable women to combine successfully their professional work and participation in public life with maternity and family obligations. These measures include: the availability of equal opportunities for the acquisition of education and vocational training; a ban on all forms of discrimination in the areas of labour relations, the free selection of an occupation or trade, professional advancement, remuneration for work and paid leave; State safeguards covering the work and health of women and protecting mothers and children; and the legal protection of women's rights against discrimination on the part of any person, enterprise or organization. These measures contribute to the all-round development of Soviet women and guarantee their enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms on a basis of parity with men.

In the Soviet Union there is an operational system of agencies with responsibility for monitoring the observance of the constitutional rights of women.

In addition to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Supreme Soviets and Councils of Ministers of the union republics, the courts and justice authorities, and the offices exercising the supervisory powers of the public procurator, there are still other organs that are authorized to deal with issues involved in guaranteeing that women genuinely enjoy the same rights as men. In accordance with the 1980 law of the USSR on the basic powers of the territorial and regional Councils of the People's Deputies and the Councils of the People's Deputies in the autonomous regions and autonomous districts, these organs are charged with the organization of activities for the protection of mothers and children and for improvements in the living, working and leisure-time conditions of women.

The meetings of such deliberative bodies as the Presidia of the Supreme Soviets and the Councils of Ministers of the USSR and of the union and autonomous republics, as well as the executive committees of the local councils, provide forums at which questions can be raised regarding improvements in the living,

working and leisure-time conditions of women, the safeguarding of maternity and childhood, and compliance with the legislation in these areas.

Issues pertaining to the working and living conditions of women and to the protection of mothers and children are a subject of particular attention on the part of the standing commissions on the working and living conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children, which have been established by the Supreme and local councils. The two chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR - the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities - first created these commissions in 1976. Their tasks include the following: to formulate proposals on the working and living conditions of women and to submit them for examination by the appropriate chambers or by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; to assist the State agencies and organizations and also the deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in their practical work of implementing the decisions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and its Presidium in the areas of women's working and living conditions and protection for mothers and children; to monitor the activities of the ministries and departments, and also of the republic and local agencies, enterprises and organizations, in carrying out legislation designed to safeguard the rights of women.

Similar commissions have been created under the Supreme Soviets of the union and autonomous republics, and also under the local Councils of the People's Deputies.

The trade unions have an enormous role to play in safeguarding the constitutional rights of women.

Operating under the Presidium of the All-Union Central Trade Union Council, there is a commission on the working and living conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children. Among its members, the majority of women are industrial, office and trade union workers as well as scientists. The tasks of this and of similar commissions set up under the trade union committees at the enterprises and organizations of the country include that of finding solutions to the important socio-economic problems of interest to working women, such as, specifically, the upgrading of professional qualifications, the introduction of healthful and safe working conditions, social security, mass cultural work, assistance to families in the raising of children, etc.

Since 1986, the country has been engaged in the establishment of a unified system of women's councils under the aegis of the Committee of Soviet Women. The women's councils operate in the districts, regions and republics of the country within working collectives and at places of residence. The basis of their work is the creative initiative and spontaneous activity of the female community in all areas of production and socio-political life, in the management of the affairs of the State and society, and in the search for solutions to social and other problems. An important task of our country's women's organizations is that of active involvement in the international women's movement and in the struggle for peace and friendship among nations.

With the participation of the women's councils, the State organs adopt their decisions on all matters pertaining to the working, living and leisure-time conditions of women.

As the economic might of the Soviet State continues to grow, the material and legal guarantees for the equality of women are also strengthened. The implementation of the social policy which is contemplated in the State plans (long-range, five-year and annual) for the economic and social development of the

USSR and which involves measures in the areas of improved working and living conditions for women, safeguards for mothers and children, and family assistance, ensures that the status of Soviet women will be steadily enhanced.

In the Soviet Union, three-quarters of the national income is expended on consumption, and if outlays for housing and socio-cultural construction are taken into account, four-fifths of this income may be said to be directly allocated to increasing the prosperity of the people.

In 1985, the national income spent for consumption totalled 417,600 million roubles, which was more than 10 per cent above the 1982 figure. During the period 1981-1985, the public's real per capita income increased by 11 per cent.

Payments and benefits financed out of the public consumption funds are rising. On a per capita basis, these expenditures amounted in 1982 to 477 roubles and in 1985 to 530 roubles, whereas for the period 1981-1985 as a whole they increased by 25 per cent. The public consumption funds are used to finance the State system of free public education, student scholarships, annual leave, and the accommodation of children in pre-school centres. In 1984, more than 50 per cent of the total sum of benefits and allowances granted was in the form of monetary payments.

In recent years, centralized measures have been introduced in the area of labour remuneration. Wages have been inceased in a number of branches, and also for a substantial portion of the country's agricultural workers. New wage benefits have been introduced for workers in the textile, light and chemical industries, as well as in the non-manufacturing area, where women account for more than one-half of all employed persons. In September 1984, a stage-by-stage salary increase was initiated for teachers of secondary general education schools and for the teaching staff of secondary special education establishments, industrial vocational training colleges, boarding schools and kindergartens.

Since 1986, there has been a gradual rise in the salaries paid at health care and social security institutions. Remuneration for workers at these establishments is to increase by 35.6 per cent.

During the period 1986-1990, new higher wage rates and salary scales will be introduced for workers in the production branches of the national economy.

Improvements are being made according to plan in the living conditions of the Soviet family. Every year more than 2 million new flats are being built. During the period 1981-1985, over 50 million persons experienced an improvement in their housing situation.

Rent has remained unchanged since 1928 and, when utilities are included, currently accounts, on the average, for only 3 per cent of family income. In 1982, the practice was introduced of granting interest-free loans, with a repayment period of up to eight years, for housing improvements or in order to enable young families to set up a household. With the birth of a second and third child, this loan is partially liquidated by the enterprise. In total, these liquidations amount to one-third of the loan.

In accordance with the State Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for the Period 1981-1985, a broad range of measures has been put into effect for the purpose of further improving the material situation, housing and living conditions, and leisure-time opportunities for families with children, and of creating favourable conditions for the raising of children and for the

performance by women of their functions within the home and at the work-place. During the period in question, the following measures were implemented: additional leave was instituted for working women with two or more children of up to 12 years of age; partially paid child-care leave was introduced for mothers of children who have not yet completed their first year; supplementary unpaid leave was extended until the completion by the child of its eighteenth month, in addition to which one-time maternity allowances were introduced for the mother's first three children; greater opportunities were provided for obtaining children's allowances in the case of low-income families; benefits in connection with payment for the accommodation of children in pre-school centres and pioneer camps were increased; more generous material assistance to single mothers was made available; and temporary benefits for minor children were increased to cover the period spent in searching for parents guilty of evading their support payment obligations.

In the next few years, in accordance with the Basic Directions of Economic and Social Development for the Years 1986-1990 and for the Period to the Year 2000, there is to be continued implementation of measures aimed at further improving the status of mothers, at assisting families in the performance of their social functions and the raising of children, and at upgrading the material, housing and living conditions of families with children and of newly married couples.

PART II

Participation of Soviet women in the struggle for peace

Soviet women unanimously support the peace-loving foreign policy of the Government of the Soviet Union. They warmly welcomed the enactment in our country of the Law on the Defence of Peace (1952), which declared the propagandizing of war to be a crime of the most grievous kind against humanity. The Constitution of the USSR proclaims as the overriding foreign policy objectives of the Soviet State the pursuit of peace, the strengthening of the security of nations and the cultivation of broad international co-operation (article 28).

Soviet women wholeheartedly and fully endorse the initiatives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government on behalf of peace, the programme to achieve nuclear disarmament by the end of the current century, the proposals on security and peaceful co-operation in the Asian-Pacific region, the range of measures jointly proposed by the member States of the Warsaw Pact on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, the concept of the creation of a comprehensive system of international security, and the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions that has more than once been extended by the Soviet side. All these initiatives, in addition to being aimed at the search for mutual understanding, dialogue and a strengthening of peaceful coexistence as the universal norm in relationships between States, define the principal thrust of the struggle for the elimination of the nuclear threat.

For Soviet women the struggle for peace is a continuing and daily commitment, and as such it is inseparable from the struggle for the consolidation of socialism. Soviet women understand that their personal happiness, the happiness of their families and the future of their children is indissolubly linked to the fate of their country and to its achievements.

Not only are Soviet women participating in manifestations of solidarity, forums and meetings devoted to the cause of peace, but they may also be found protesting the outrageous and arbitrary acts of the imperialist aggressors and co-operating with women's anti-war movements in other countries.

They are actively involved in the work of the Soviet Peace Foundations, which was created under the initiative of many public organizations, * including the Committee of Soviet Women. The Soviet Peace Foundation endeavours to promote the development of relations and contacts between the Soviet public and the peace-loving community abroad, to which end it makes available financial resources to Soviet public organizations. The Foundation assists in conducting scholarly research into the problems of peace, in putting out publications and posters, and in producing documentary films dealing with the subject of peace and friendship among peoples. At the district, municipal and working-collective levels, 350,000 co-operating committees for the support of the Peace Foundation have been established, bringing together some 5 million persons. The majority of the Foundation's republic and regional committees are headed by women. Nearly two-thirds of the Foundation's local active members are also women.

At the present time, the Soviet Peace Foundation numbers more than 90 million participants, i.e., nearly one out of three inhabitants of our country is contributing materially, through the Foundation, to the noble and humane cause of the struggle for peace.

Soviet women regard the task of inculcating in the rising generation the spirit of peace and friendship among peoples as one of the key approaches to their work on behalf of peace. All the institutions connected in our country with the education of the younger generation - the family, the pre-school centres, the schools, the vocational, secondary technical and higher educational establishments, the information media, the publishing community, the theatre and the cinema - are involved in this work. The school year begins with a "peace lesson", the purpose of which is to instil in the young the spirit of peace and friendship among nations.

Soviet women are endeavouring to forge strong and friendly ties with women of different countries and continents. In the international women's movement and at international, regional and national forums, the women of the Soviet Union are represented by the Committee of Soviet Women, a public organization which was created in 1941 and whose primary objective is the maintenance and strengthening of peace. Matters pertaining to the participation of Soviet women in the struggle for peace are included in the agendas of the Committee's annual plenary sessions. These sessions are regularly attended by women industrial and collective farm workers, teachers and doctors, engineers and scientists, representatives of the world of literature and the arts, and public and political figures. The 1985 plenum of the Committee of Soviet Women addressed to the women of the world a declaration entitled "For the peoples' right to life", which contained an appeal to do everything possible in order to avert a repetition of the horrors of war and fascism.

The aspirations of Soviet women to safeguard the peace are reflected on the pages of the press, including the central and republic journals, among them those published specially for women. The journal "Soviet Woman", which is published by the Committee of Soviet Women in 14 languages, devotes half of its articles to the contribution of Soviet women to the struggle for peace.

The magazine carries a permanent feature entitled "Tribunal of the world's scientists: For averting the threatened destruction of life on Earth", along with articles by doctors, jurists, ecologists, biologists, physicists, chemists and

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* Translator's note: The term "public organization" may refer to any organized non-productive society.

others. The purpose of these writings is to drive home the catastrophic consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons, and to make it clear that any talk about the feasibility of limited nuclear war is a hideous deception, that neutron warfare threatens an unavoidable cataclysm, and that the unleashing of a nuclear war simply must not be permitted.

Soviet women warmly endorsed the noble aims of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development, Peace. They were very actively involved in the preparation and deliberations of the World Conferences in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985), which called upon the international community to take genuine measures to improve the status of women, pointing in particular to the need to strengthen the peace as a means of achieving the objectives and tasks that had been set to this end.

A joint statement drafted by the delegations of the socialist countries at the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women (Nairobi, 1985) emphasized that the major lesson of the Second World War, which had brought incalculable suffering to hundreds of millions of the world's women, was that war had to be fought before it began. This requires the joining of active and concerted efforts.

Soviet women greeted with profound satisfaction the decision adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session to declare 1986 an International Year of Peace. As part of the observance of the Year, a peace school was conducted in Leningrad with the participation of women representatives of the national women's organizations and anti-war movements of the participating countries of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The city of Tashkent was chosen as the venue for a seminar on the subject "Women and development: Women's contribution to the maintenance of peace", in which women's organization representatives from Asian and Pacific Ocean countries took part.

These events were also attended by representatives of international non-governmental organizations and of the United Nations system, including its specialized agencies.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, sent a message of greetings to the participants of the Tashkent seminar, in which he expressed high praise for the contribution of Soviet women to the pursuit of the noble objectives underlying the International Year of Peace.

Participation of Soviet women in the socio-political life of the country

At the heart of the Soviet Union's official policy of involving women in political and public life is the principle that holds the participation of women in the management of the affairs of State to be an essential element of genuine equality in terms of sex. At the current stage of national development, the massive involvement of the workers, both men and women, in the management of society and the State means steady progress towards the goal of socialist self-administration by the people at a time when this administration is being effected not only in the interests of the workers but, increasingly, by the workers acting directly on their own behalf.

The Constitution of the USSR (article 48) grants all citizens - men and women - the right to participate in the management of State and public affairs. This right is secured through the possibility of voting and being elected to the Councils of the People's Deputies and other elected governmental bodies, and of participating in nation-wide discussions and votes, in the exercise of people's control, in the work of State agencies, public organizations and voluntary

non-governmental bodies, and in meetings organized by working collectives and at the citizen's place of residence.

The level of Soviet women's public and political activity continued to rise during the period 1982-1985. This is confirmed by the comparative statistical data for 1982 and 1985. For example, the number of women elected to the organs of State authority - the Councils of the People's Deputies - increased during the four years in question from 1,146,000 to 1,160,000.

A high level of participation by women in the work of the Councils is characteristic of all the union republics. According to the data for the latest elections (1985), women accounted for 51 per cent of the membership of the local councils in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), 50 per cent in the Ukrainian SSR, 50 per cent in the Byelorussian SSR, 48 per cent in the Uzbek SSR, 50 per cent in the Kazakh SSR, 51 per cent in the Georgian SSR, 48 per cent in the Azerbaidzhan SSR, 50 per cent in the Lithuanian SSR, 50 per cent in the Moldavian SSR, 50 per cent in the Latvian SSR, 50 per cent in the Kirgiz SSR, 50 per cent in the Tadzhik SSR, 50 per cent in the Armenian SSR, 50 per cent in the Turkmen SSR and 50 per cent in the Estonian SSR.

The 1984 elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR also confirmed the increasing involvement of Soviet women in the public and political arena. A total of 492 women were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, representing 33 per cent of the deputies to that body (in 1979 there were 487 women deputies to the Supreme Soviet, or 32 per cent of the total membership). This increase in the number of women deputies in the country's highest organ of authority extended to both houses - the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities. Women deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR are drawn from industrial and collective farmworkers and the intelligentsia and represent many nationalities and ethnic groups from within our country, different generations and occupations.

Women deputies have seats on the commissions of both chambers of the Supreme Soviet, including the Commission on Foreign Affairs, the Commission on Youth Affairs, the Commission on Public Health, the Commission on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and the Protection of Mothers and Children, etc. They participate in the discussion of proposed legislation, in the approval of national economic development plans and the State budget, and in the adoption of decisions regarding the most vital issues of domestic and foreign policy.

Tens of thousands of women hold responsible positions in the local Councils of the People's Deputies and serve as chairmen, deputy chairmen and executive committee section heads. Women also participate in the management of the production sector, where they perform a wide range of functions (planning, organization and supervision), in addition to which they account for some 65 per cent of the personnel of the agencies of State Government and economic administration and of the bodies with responsibility for managing the activities of co-operative and public organizations at all levels.

Women represent 11 per cent of the supervisory staff at production combines and enterprises.

Soviet women occupy responsible positions in the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Councils of Ministers of the union republics. There are 22 women at the head of ministries in the union republics, including ministers of various branches of industry, education, culture, foreign affairs, justice and social security.

The role of women in the different organs of the justice system is increasing. In 1985, 3,968 women were elected as people's court judges, representing 37 per cent of the total number of people's court judges in the Soviet Union. Among the lay court assessors there are 420,551 women, which is 5o per cent of the total number of lay assessors.

Women are participating constructively and energetically in the activities of different public organizations and mass worker associations. The participation of these broad-based organizations in the activities of the common Soviet State is provided for under the Constitution of the USSR. Not only may their representatives be found in election commissions at all levels, but the public organizations also have the right to put forward their own candidates for deputies, and in fact they make active use of this right. The views of the public organizations are taken into account when preparing new laws and other standard-setting regulations. In a number of cases, these organizations are granted the right to block the execution of managerial decisions.

For young women, the country's youth organizations provide an excellent training school for public activity. Women represent more than half of all the members of the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League (Komsomol) and more than half of the secretaries of the primary Komsomol organizations. They account for about 30 per cent of the secretaries of the League's regional and territorial committees and of the Komsomol central committees in the union republics.

Practically all working women are trade union members and are broadly represented in supervisory positions within the unions. Women account for more than half of all trade union members. They represent 35.8 per cent of the staff of the leading trade union body, the All-Union Central Trade Union Council, 44 per cent of the staff of the central committees of the branch unions, 47 per cent of the staff of the trade union councils, and 51 per cent of the staff of the republic, territorial and regional trade union committees. Of the trade union committee chairmen, more than 60 per cent are women.

Women's involvement in the co-operative organizations is also considerable. For example, women represent 67 per cent of the share-holding members of the consumer co-operative movement. Within their co-operatives, many women have been elected to the board of directors, the control and auditing commission and other committees. One out of every three consumer society board chairmen is a woman.

Women are actively working in such public organizations as the Committee of Soviet Women, the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Soviet Committee for the Defence of Peace, the Soviet Peace Foundation and others.

The large-scale involvement of women in public production, their rising general cultural attainments and professional qualifications, and their increasing knowledgeability are all factors that ensure a reliable basis for further advances in their participation in public and political life.

Guarantees of equal rights in the area of education

In accordance with the Basic Principles of the Legislation of the Soviet Union and the Union Republics on Public Education in the USSR, all of the following are guaranteed: the equality of all citizens of the USSR in respect of opportunities for aquiring education, regardless of sex; general and compulsory secondary education for young people; the public character of all educational and training establishments as institutions of the State; freedom to choose the language of instruction; instruction in the student's own language or in the language of

another national group within the USSR; the free nature of all forms of education, the provision of full State support for a part of those engaged in studies, the issue of textbooks at no charge, the availability of scholarships for students and the eligibility of the latter for specified allowances and other forms of material assistance; the unity of the system of public education and the continuity of all types of academic establishments, making it possible to advance from lower to higher levels of education; the relevance of the younger generation's training and education to the genuine concerns of life and to the practical objective of building a new society; joint instruction for persons of both sexes; etc.

The implementation of these principles has opened up for women broad access to technical vocational training and to education at the specialized secondary and higher levels. With account taken of the needs of the society, women are able to aquire any profession in keeping with their inclinations, calling and abilities. Marriage in no way limits a woman in terms of her free choice of a profession or occupation (article 11 of the Basic Principles of the Legislation on Marriage). She may independently and without the consent of her husband decide where she wishes to acquire her vocational training - whether at an educational institution or directly on the job. Any actions on the part of the husband aimed at restricting his wife's freedom to choose a profession or occupation represent grounds for the dissolution of the marriage.

Within the enrolment at higher institutions of learning, women represented 52 per cent of the student body during the 1981-1982 academic year, and 54 per cent during the 1984-1985 academic year. Women appear to be most interested in educational programmes in the area of economics and law (where female students account for 71 per cent of the enrolment), education, art and cinematography (72 per cent) and public health (59 per cent). They account for 42 per cent of the students enrolled at higher institutions of technical education. The number of women at intermediate secondary technical schools also increased from 56 per cent in 1982 to 58 per cent in 1984.

There has been a continuous rise in the level of education of Soviet women: in 1979, of every 1,000 women employed in the national economy, 801 had a background of secondary and higher education (complete or partial), whereas by 1984 the figure had risen to 862.

The availability of equal opportunities in education and employment has led to the extensive involvement of women in science. For the country as a whole, women accounted for 39.9 per cent of the total number of scientific workers in 1980, and for 40.0 per cent in 1984. Of the total number of women pursuing careers in science, 14 per cent held a doctorate degree and 28 per cent the degree of Candidate of Sciences.

At a time of scientific and technical progress, great importance attaches to the increasing percentage of women within the engineering community. In the industrial sector, every other engineer is a woman. Some 3 million women are members of the All-Union Society of Inventors and Rationalizers.

The reform of the general educational and vocational school system in progress within the country is contributing to an improvement in the whole area of education and to an upgrading in the training given to the younger generation to equip them for life and work. This reform is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of education, ensuring that students are familiar with the use of computers, and radically improving the preparation of youth for independent life and work.

Some 11,000 million roubles have been allocated from the State budget for the implementation of the measures connected with the reform of the general educational

and vocational school system. This sum includes, calculated on a yearly basis, 3,500 million roubles for salary increases for teachers and other educational workers, of whom women represent 75 per cent.

During the twelfth five-year plan (1986-1990), in addition to some 800 technical trade colleges, new schools are to be built to provide 7 million places, i.e., nearly twice as many as during the 1981-1985 period.

Equality in employment

Women in the USSR enjoy the same right as men to work, i.e., to guaranteed employment under which their labour paid in accordance with its quantity and quality and not below a minimum level set by the State. This includes the right to the selection of a profession or occupation and of work in accordance with the individual's calling, abilities, professional training and education, and with account taken of the needs of society (article 40 of the Constitution of the USSR). This principle has been given concrete expression in the labour legislation.

The law prohibits any direct or indirect limitation of rights, or the establishment of any direct or indirect advantages in hiring, for reasons of sex, race, national origin or attitude towards religion (article 9 of the Basic Principles of the Legislation on Labour).

The labour legislation makes it illegal to refuse to hire women, or to reduce their wages, for reasons connected with the fact that they may be pregnant or nursing a child.

The dismissal of pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women with children of up to one year of age at the initiative of the management is not allowed, except in cases involving the total liquidation of an institution, enterprise or organization, at which time dismissal is permitted, but with the mandatory requirement that new employment must be provided (article 73 of the Basic Principles of the Legislation on Labour).

Under State planning of the socialist economy - with its goals of the uniform development of all regions of the country and the different branches of the national economy, the rational allocation of production forces, the comprehensive exploitation of natural resources, the creation of new industrial centres, the accelerated development of new forms of production under the influence of scientific and technical progress - there is a guaranteed and stable demand for labour. By regulating the availability of labour according to plan and on a scale embracing the entire society, it becomes possible to use such workers as are released in the course of economic restructuring at alternative sites, thereby effectively guaranteeing the full employment of the economically active population.

For the practical solution of questions relating to job placement, State agencies with responsibility for the utilization of labour resources have been established throughout the country. Working together with the ministries and enterprises, and with the participation of the trade unions, these organs review the issues involved in the redistribution of industrial and office workers within specific enterprises, within the national economy and within a specific territory.

Thanks to the use of the full range of socio-economic, legal, political and demographic factors on a planned basis, the USSR has succeeded in ensuring near-maximum employment of women in the economy. Of the total pool of women of employable age, 92 per cent are either working or studying at day-time educational establishments, and of this number 84 per cent are working only. In 1982, the number of women employed as industrial and office workers totalled 58.9 million,

and in 1985 - 60 million. The percentage of women among all specialists employed in the national economy has reached 60 per cent.

The far-reaching restructuring of the economy which is taking place in the country on the basis of the latest achievements of science and technology brings with it greater demands in terms of the general educational level and technical proficiency of the workers. Qualified workers for key posts are trained in the USSR at technical trade schools, where girls are free to select at will the trade or occupation in which they wish to become qualified. During the instruction period, all students, regardless of sex, are fully supported by the State, which pays them a stipend, provides them with food and issues them a uniform.

Beside the State system of vocational technical training, the enterprises themselves are directly involved in training workers for different occupations and also in upgrading their qualifications. To this end, an extensive system of courses, programmes, schools and teaching associations has been set up at the enterprise level.

In order to create conditions conducive to the continuous improvement by the workers of their skills, the enterprises are given annual worker training and proficiency-improvement assignments, which since 1979 have included special assignments for upgrading the qualifications of women. Moreover, not only do women enjoy equal opportunities with men in the skill-improvement area, but a number of advantages as well. For example, mothers with children of up to eight years of age are released from their basic work-related duties, but retain their average monthly wage during the period they spend in retraining or in qualification-enhancement programmes.

Women account for nearly 50 per cent of the supervisors and specialists undergoing training to increase their skill ratings.

A number of special benefits have been established under the law for persons engaged in part-time training (i.e., with no disruption of their job-related duties). These include: a reduction of the working week or in the duration of daily work with payment in the amount of 50 per cent of the regular wage, and also paid training leave.

The consistent policy of the USSR is to create firm guarantees to enable every woman to exercise her right to work. All persons who have successfully completed their vocational training are ensured employment. According to data for 1984, women are most prominently represented in health care, physical culture and social security (82 per cent), public education (75 per cent) and culture (74 per cent).

As part of their active role in the professional world women are entitled to equal remuneration for their labour. The Basic Principles of the Legislation of the Soviet Union and the Union Republics on Labour (article 36) make it illegal to apply a lower wage or salary entitlement for reasons of sex, age, race or national origin. The right to equal pay for equal work is guaranteed under the system of centralized wage control. This system includes among its elements unified wage and salary scales for the performance of identical kinds of work in different branches, regardless of sex. In 1982, the average monthly pay of industrial and office workers amounted to 177.3 roubles, and in 1985 to 190 roubles. During the period 1981-1985, the wages and salaries of industrial and office workers increased by 13 per cent, and of collective farm workers by 29 per cent. Taking into account allowances and benefits financed out of the social consumption funds, the average monthly wage in 1982 was 246.8 roubles, and in 1985 - 268 roubles.

A particular feature in the way Soviet women's right to work is implemented in practice may be seen in the fact that the employment provided entails favourable working conditions of a kind that pose no threat to either the woman's health or to the performance of her maternal function.

Work-place safeguards for women include a range of economic, legal, medical and technical measures aimed at creating the kind of working conditions that will allow every woman to combine a professional career in the public sector with her role as mother.

As planned, measures are being introduced, in all branches of the economy, to bring about improvements in the working conditions of women. For example, production processes are first mechanized and automated at work-sites where women are employed. At present, women account for about half the workers engaged in mechanized labour, for 78 per cent of automatic assembly line operators, and for 40.3 per cent of operators working with automatic machines.

To a very considerable extent, the active involvement of women in the labour market, their professional growth and the availability of favourable conditions for the raising of their children depend on the arrangements for day-to-day living. The Soviet Government is greatly concerned with improving the performance of the service and amenities sector. For the country as a whole, the number of enterprises operating in this sector totalled 276,000 in 1982 and 286,000 in 1984. During the same period, the monetary volume of amenity services to the public increased from 8,800 million roubles to 9,800 million roubles. It was to address the problems in this area that the Government adopted in 1985 the Comprehensive Programme for the Development of Consumer Goods Production and the Amenity Service Sector over the Period 1986-2000. This programme looks forward to an increased volume of more diversified and better-quality goods and services for the purpose of completely satisfying the public's growing requirements in a variety of areas having to do with housing, utilities, amenities and with social and cultural opportunities. Other related objectives are the lightening of housework and the provision of more adequate conditions for relaxation and the constructive use of leisure time. In this connection, the development of the service sector is to be particularly accelerated in rural localities and in newly settled regions.

Social security for women

Like the right to work, so too the right to State and publicly funded social security serves as an economic guarantee of material security for women.

The principle of the equality of women in the social security area is reflected in the fact of equal entitlements for both men and women. The basic old-age pension benefit is set according to the beneficiary's earnings, ranging between 50 and 75 per cent of his or her previous wages or salary.

During the period 1981-1985, a 20 per cent pension supplement was introduced for industrial and office workers with lengthy and uninterrupted service at one and the same enterprise.

The legislation also provides for special social insurance benefits for women only. Women become eligible for old-age pensions at age 55 and after a period of service of not less than 20 years, whereas for men the earliest age is 60 years after not less than 25 years of service (article 8 of the Law of the USSR on State Pensions). Women who have given birth to five or more children and who have raised them until their eighth year, and also mothers with a child disabled from its earliest years, may claim an old-age pension at age 55 with only five years of working service (article 12 of the Law of the USSR on State Pensions in the wording

of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of 2 September 1981).

In 1985, outlays for social security and social insurance measures totalled 61,100 million roubles, representing an increase of 12 per cent over the 1982 figure.

All pensioners, regardless of sex, are entitled to the equal enjoyment of the collective forms of social security and services for the elderly and the disabled: boarding houses and residential homes fully supported by the State. Elderly persons living at home can call on a range of social services (currently being expanded) that are delivered directly to their place of residence. Such persons, in addition to having food and other products brought to their homes, are provided with the necessary utility and amenity services, medical care and the like.

Situation of women in rural localities

In the USSR, all the provisions of the Convention are also observed in the case of women living in rural localities. Their equality with men is secured through their enjoyment of all the rights contemplated in the Constitution of the USSR. Rural women are also eligible for all the privileges and benefits available under Soviet legislation.

These women fully exercise their right to education and vocational training, to the free selection of a profession or occupation, and to equal pay for equal work.

All women wishing to work in agricultural production are ensured of employment, and women in fact account for 45 per cent of the collective farm work-force.

Training for workers who are to assume key positions in agriculture is provided at the agricultural trade schools, and training for specialists at the higher institutions of learning and technical colleges, where during the 1984-1985 academic year women accounted for 35 and 36 per cent of the enrolment, respectively.

Women represent a substantial portion of the country's agricultural specialists. Among the agronomists, animal specialists, veterinary doctors and economists with higher education, they account for 37 per cent, and among those with secondary specialized education for 52 per cent.

The number of women mechanization experts is increasing. These women are assigned agricultural machines equipped with seats and cabins of the most advanced design. Moreover, they also benefit from additional privileges: for example, women tractor operators engaged in agricultural production are granted 12 days of additional leave; for women mechanization specialists working on tractors, combines and other complicated farm equipment, 10 per cent lower output standards are in effect; preferential conditions apply to the awarding of old-age pensions, for which women in this occupational category become eligible at age 50 after a period of service of only 15 years.

The increasing mechanization of agricultural operations, the introduction of modern equipment, the organization of large-scale specialized agricultural complexes, etc., are all factors that are conspiring to bring about a convergence in the nature of agricultural and industrial work, while at the same time substantially adding to the opportunities of rural women to exercise their right to work.

The constitutional requirements for safeguards in the employment of women are fully observed in rural localities as well. This applies to the ban on the employment of women in jobs involving strenuous and harmful working conditions, and also to the area of special work-site protection during the period of active maternity. Soviet women take full advantage of the privileges and special benefits established under the laws of the USSR for all working women: children's allowances, special benefits for pregnant women and nursing mothers, the granting of pregnancy, maternity and child-care leave, regular medical examinations for preventive purposes, and the like.

Outlays for pensions and benefits, education and health care for rural residents are financed out of the State budget and the centralized social security fund for collective farm workers. In 1980, the minimum pension entitlement for women collective farm workers was increased by 40 per cent. Since 1985, minimum pension benefits have been raised for collective farm members to cover old age, disability and the loss of a breadwinner, in addition to which pension entitlements set more than 10 years ago have been increased. Measures have been taken to build additional boarding homes for pensioners and disabled persons in rural areas. These and many other measures introduced in recent years have had a positive effect on the status of elderly women in rural communities.

Public funds for the care of children and the provision of amenity services are being substantially increased throughout the countryside. In rural areas, alongside the facilities that are in permanent operation during the period of field work, seasonal nurseries and kindergartens are being set up. In 1985, these facilities provided care for more than one million children.

With the expansion and improvement of public services, the planned goal of creating better and more comfortable living conditions for rural inhabitants is being achieved. The volume of amenity services provided in rural localities increased in 1984 by a factor of 3.8 in comparison with 1970. Housing construction continues to gain momentum: during the period 1976-1980, at the collective farms alone 57,500,000 square metres of housing were built, and in the single year of 1984 - 11,900,000 square metres.

The increase in the participation of women in the agricultural labour market has been accompanied by a high degree of public and political activity on their part. Rural women are represented in all the organs of State authority without exception - from the rural Councils of the People's Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Many rural working women have been elected to leadership positions in Party, Komsomol and trade union organizations, in addition to which they are serving as directors of collective and State farms, on collective farm councils, as members of the governing boards and auditing commissions of rural consumer collective organizations, and in other capacities as well.

The forward-looking changes that are currently taking place in agricultural production, coupled with the accelerated expansion of the social infrastructure in rural communities, are contributing to a convergence of the levels of economic development in the towns and countryside and to a more uniform life-style on the part of the urban and rural populations.

Motherhood - a social function of women

State assistance to the family

The Constitution of the USSR provides for the legal protection and for the material and moral support of maternity and childhood (article 35).

The arrangements for the protection of mothers and children include a range of labour-related privileges and additional guarantees for pregnant women and mothers. It is, for example, not permissible to refuse to hire a woman or to reduce her wage or salary for reasons connected with the fact that she is pregnant or nursing a child (article 73 of the Basic Principles of the Legislation on Labour). Pregnant women or mothers with children of up to one year of age may not be required to work at night, on holidays or on overtime, nor may they be sent on mission. Women with children of up to eight years of age may not be assigned to overtime work or sent on mission without their consent (article 69 of the Basic Principles).

The State discharges its task of protecting motherhood through a system of special institutions - maternity homes, hospital maternity departments, medical consultation offices for women, etc. - which have been given the responsibility of caring for the health of women. In the USSR, all women are eligible for free medical attention.

With each passing year there are new additions to the network of medical and obstetrical facilities providing care for pregnant and recently confined women. In 1985, there was a total of 27,800 women's consultation offices, children's clinics and out-patient centres.

Under the general scheme of public dispensary treatment being implemented in the country, particular attention is paid to the health of women and children.

In connection with pregnancy and childbirth, women are entitled to 112 calendar days of fully paid pre- and post-natal leave, which is extended to 126 days in the event of pathological complications.

During the period 1981-1983, the Government introduced partially paid child-care leave for the child's first year of life, along with supplementary unpaid leave until the child completes its eighteenth month. This leave, as well as the pregnancy and maternity leave, is credited towards the woman's total uninterrupted period of service and job seniority in her area of specialization. In all the cases cited, the woman retains the right to return to her job. One-time benefits have been introduced for the birth of a child in the amounts of 50 roubles for the first child and 100 roubles for the second and third.

Women who have adopted newborn children directly from a maternity home are treated, as far as rights and privileges are concerned, in the same way as mothers.

Working women with two or more children of up to 12 years of age are eligible for three days of supplementary paid leave and two weeks of unpaid leave. Leave of this kind may also be taken by the father in cases in which he is responsible for the raising of the children (death of the mother, dissolution of the marriage, etc.).

Since 1981, there has been an increase in the monthly allowance to single mothers. This benefit is paid until the child completes its sixteenth year, or, if the child is studying and not receiving a scholarship, until its eighteenth year.

In 1985 alone, 5,100 million roubles were allocated from social insurance and social security funds for the payment of pregnancy and maternity benefits, allowances to single mothers and mothers with numerous children, and in the form of benefits for the birth of a child, for child-care during the first year of life and for children in low-income families.

In our country, concern for the family, which plays a crucial role in raising the younger generation and strengthening its health, in securing the economic and social progress of society, and in improving demographic patterns, is a subject of enormous and increasing importance. It is within the family that a human being's basic character traits are formed, his attitude towards work is moulded, and his fundamental moral, ideological and cultural values are instilled. The socialist society is vitally interested therefore in a strong, spiritually and morally sound family.

The family in the USSR is under the protection of the State, which shows its concern for it by maintaining and expanding an extensive network of children's educational institutions, by improving the service infrastructure and public dining facilities, and by making available allowances and special benefits to families with numerous children and on the birth of a child, as well as other forms of family assistance.

During the period 1982-1985, implementation continued on a range of measures to increase assistance to families with children, to create favourable conditions so as to enable mothers to combine professional careers with the raising of their children, and to provide support to young families.

Additional facilities were added to the network of children's pre-school establishments: in comparison with 1982, the number of these establishments increased in 1985 by 7,300 to a total of 140,100 pre-school centres with an aggregate enrolment of 16.1 million children.

Since July 1984, allocations have been increased for the meals of children in pre-school institutions. Tuition at these centres is free for children from low-income families, and has been reduced by one-half for children from families with four or more children. On the whole, the State assumes 80 per cent of the costs of accommodating children at pre-school establishments.

Each family is entitled to enrol a child in a pre-school establishment. For acceptance at nursery-kindergartens, however, preference is given to the children of working mothers, mothers with numerous children and also mothers pursuing studies at evening schools, through correspondence courses and at full-time educational establishments. A priority right to the placement of a child in a pre-school children's institution is also accorded to single mothers.

Family assistance for school-age children is provided through the system of general educational schools and technical vocational training centres. During the 1984-1985 academic year, 40.8 million students were enrolled in the country's general educational schools.

There has been an increase in the number of extended-day schools and schools with extended-day groups from 83,100 during the 1981-1982 academic year to 85,800 during the 1984-1985 year. During the same period, the number of students in these groups rose from 11.3 million to 12.8 million persons. Under this form of instruction, the children remain at the school after class under the supervision of teachers and instructors until their parents return from work.

Of considerable assistance to parents in raising their children are the extra-school children's institutions, which help in developing the children's aptitudes and inclinations and their interests in social activity, work, science and technology, art and sports, as well as in organizing their leisure time along cultural lines. More than 40,000 such institutions - pioneer homes and centres, young technicians' and young naturalists' stations, musical, artistic and choreographic schools, children's railways, etc. - are attended by millions of

children. The use of these facilities costs the family budget nothing, since they are fully supported by the State.

The trade unions are a source of great assistance to families by organizing the summer vacations of children and parents. In 1985 alone, more than 17.2 million children and adolescents vacationed at the health camps operated by the trade unions. A summer vacation for the children is within the reach of every Soviet family. Since 1983, 50 per cent of the total number of authorizations to pioneer and other health camps for schoolchildren have been made available at no charge, while the remaining half have been issued at a price representing only 20 per cent of the cost.

As a result of the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the All-Union Central Trade Union Council, adopted in 1982 and entitled "On measures for further improvements in the treatment provided at sanatoria and resorts and in the recuperation of workers and on the expansion of the network of trade union health facilities", every year has brought greater opportunities for joint vacationing by parents and children. During the period from 1982 to 1984, the number of sanatoria and recuperation establishments increased by 1,300, reaching a total of 15,300 at the end of that time. Of the total number of accommodation places at these establishments, 964,000 were reserved for family vacations and 13,000 for the treatment of children accompanied by their parents.

An important instrument for the health care of working women and their children has been developed in the form of the preventive sanatoria which are attached to industrial enterprises and at which a medical base providing comprehensive, sanatorium-type treatment has been created. In 1984, health programmes for more than 300,000 mothers and their children were organized at these preventive sanatoria. In recent years, it has become a common practice to use the medical base of these preventive sanatoria for the prophylactic and health-strengthening treatment of children attending pre-school institutions.

Marital and family relations

Article 53 of the Constitution of the USSR states that "marriage is based on the mutual consent of the man and woman; the spouses are fully equal in the area of family relations". The mutual consent of the persons entering the marriage, as well as their attainment of the marriagable age, are among the mandatory conditions for the contraction of a valid marriage (article 10 of the Basic Principles of the Legislation of the Soviet Union and the Union Republics on Marriage and the Family). The failure to observe either of these conditions will result in the recognition of the marriage as invalid (article 15 of the Basic Principles). All the rules pertaining to the contraction of marriage apply equally to both the woman and the man. The law forbids any direct or indirect limitation of rights whatsoever or the establishment of any direct or indirect advantages at the time of entering marriage or in family relations on the grounds of national origin, race or attitude towards religion (article 4 of the Basic Principles).

The constitutional disposition on the equality of women and men in family relations is developed not only in the general provisions of the Basic Principles of Civil Legislation of the Soviet Union and the Union Republics on Marriage and the Family and in the family codes of the different republics, but also in the norms of family law designed to regulate specific marital and family relationships.

In accordance with Soviet legislation on marriage and the family, the personal rights of the spouses, including the right to the selection of a family name when entering into marriage, the right to the joint settlement of issues pertaining to

family life and the raising of children, and the right to the free selection of an occupation, profession and place of residence, belong to both spouses on a basis of parity. The spouses also enjoy equal rights with respect to the ownership, use and disposition of property acquired during the marriage (article 12 of the Basic Principles).

The spouses - the wife and husband - also enjoy equal rights and duties in the event the marriage is dissolved.

In the interest of protecting the woman in her role as mother, the law provides for the obligation of the husband to support his wife, regardless of her ability to work, during the period of pregnancy and for 18 months following the birth of a child. This right is maintained even after the marriage has been dissolved.

The father and mother have equal rights and duties with regard to their children. These rights remain equal in the event also that the marriage of the parents is terminated. The parents are also fully equal in their rights and duties with regard to their children when a child has been born out of wedlock, on the condition that the paternity has been established either in the form of a joint declaration to this effect by the parents at a civil registration office or by decision of the court (article 16 of the Basic Principles).

The rights of parents may not be exercised contrary to the interests of their children (article 18 of the Basic Principles). Primary account is taken of the children's interests when settling any issue pertaining to them, e.g., when selecting the child's name and family name, when determining with which of the two separated parents the child is to live, when establishing procedures for the participation of a separated parent in raising a child and maintaining contact with it, etc.

The woman has the right to determine on her own the question as to whether or not to give birth to a child. If she does not wish to have a child, she has the right to an abortion, which is performed free of charge at State-operated medical institutions. Women can receive counselling on the avoidance of pregnancy at special women's consultation offices.

Women are entitled, on a basis of parity with men, to act as a tutor or guardian or to adopt children, and they enjoy equal rights in the performance of these duties (articles 24 and 26 of the Basic Principles). Adoption in the USSR is permitted only in the interests of the children. When establishing tutelage or guardianship or selecting the tutor or guardian, once again it is solely the interests of the children that are the guiding factor.

In continuing its efforts on behalf of a stronger family, the Soviet State has enacted more effective legal provisions to safeguard the rights of women in the area of family relations and has carried forward its policy of material support for single mothers and of protection for the rights of children. Measures have been adopted to increase material assistance for children whose parents are evading their responsibility to provide support. In February 1984, a decree was adopted by the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR that simplified the court proceedings for the exaction of support for minor children in cases in which there is no dispute between the parents.

Penal legislation

In the penal legislation of the Soviet Union and the union republics there neither are nor can be any provisions of a discriminatory nature against women,

since, as has already been noted, the Constitution of the USSR forbids discrimination on the basis of sex. On the contrary, a number of criminal law provisions are aimed at safeguarding the rights and interests of women. In accordance with article 134 of the Criminal Code of the RFRSR and the corresponding articles in the criminal codes of the other union republics, it is a crime to refuse to hire a woman, to dismiss her or to lower her wages for reasons connected with pregnancy or the nursing of a child. Criminal responsibility is also provided for rape, the illegal performance of an abortion under conditions constituting a threat to the health of the woman, malicious evasion of child support payments, the operation of a den of vice, pandering for personal profit, the payment of acceptance of a bride-price, the act of coercing a woman to enter marriage or of preventing her from doing so, bigamy or polygamy, etc. The amnesty acts adopted in the USSR apply in the first instance to women who have minor children.

* * *

The Soviet Union, as one of the first States to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, is meticulously observing all these provisions.

The information contained in this report attests to the fulfilment by the Government of the USSR of all of its commitments under the Convention.

The broad-based participation of Soviet women in the management of State affairs, in the public production sector, in scientific activities and in the creation of spiritual values is a major objective of the socialist society and a necessary condition for its development.

The acceleration of the socio-economic development of the country, the consistent and steady expansion of socialist self-management by the people, and the further elevation of national prosperity are all factors that are opening up new and favourable opportunities for the enhancement of the role of women in the labour market, in society and within the family, and for the display by women of initiative and creative activity.

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against Women (CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second Periodic Reports of States parties

Addendum

BYELORUSSIAN SSR

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PART I

General assessment of progress

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is consistently engaged in the implementation of a variety of measures, including those of a legislative nature, aimed at guaranteeing women the enjoyment of rights and liberties on a basis of parity with men. The principle of equal rights for women and men in all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life is legislatively anchored in article 33 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR. Concern for the systematic improvement of women's living and working conditions and for the advancement of their status in all spheres of public life has been elevated to the level of State policy and is practically reflected in a special system of social, economic and legislative measures. These provide for a system of privileges or special benefits that enable women to combine successfully their roles as workers and mothers.

Byelorussian women participate actively and on an equal footing with men in the political life of the Republic. They make wide use of their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote and to be elected to the organs of State government. Women represent more than 37 per cent of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR and about one half of the members of the local Councils of the People's Deputies. All told, women account for 64 per cent of the personnel of the agencies of State government and economic administration and of the bodies with responsibility for managing the activities of the co-operative and public organizations.

The existing legislation guarantees women in the Byelorussian SSR equal rights to the free selection of a profession or occupation, professional advancement, equal pay for equal work, and paid leave.

Although article 33 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR establishes equal rights for women and men (whereby this equality extends to opportunities in respect of education and vocational training as well as to the areas of work and remuneration for labour), in actual practice women enjoy a number of special privileges or benefits. Specifically, women become entitled to an old-age pension beginning at age 55 after a period of service of not less than 20 years; the pensionable age for men is 60 years with a period of employment of not less than 25 years. In the case of many occupations, depending on the nature of the work and the conditions under which it is performed, this age requirement has been lowered. Also eligible for this same privilege are women who have given birth to five or more children and have raised them until their eighth year. These benefits are provided under the system of State-financed social insurance. The social insurance fund is used to pay working women benefits for the temporary loss of the ability to work, allowances for the care of sick children, as well as pensions for old age, disability and the loss of a breadwinner, in addition to which these women also receive passes to sanatoria and rest homes or, in the case of their children, at pioneer camps.

In order to find solutions to the problems entailed in further improving the socio-economic living and working conditions of women and the assistance available to them for raising their children, the Government of the Byelorussian SSR is introducing the necessary steps and has charged the ministries and departments of the Republic with the formulation of the appropriate long-term measures.

The State's plans for the social and economic development of the Republic, which are prepared by the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and acquire the force of law following their approval by the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR, take

into account the recommendations of the Commission on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and on the Protection of Mothers and Children, which was created under the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR in 1977. This Commission monitors both the implementation of the relevant tasks contemplated under the plan, as well as compliance with the legislation on the protection of women's rights. It collects and analyses data on various regions and economic branches with a view to their subsequent examination and the formulation of appropriate recommendations. Similar commissions with analogous functions operate in all six territorial areas (oblasts) of the Republic and also under the Minsk Municipal Council of the People's Deputies.

In 1977, there was established the Permanent Commission of the Byelorussian Republic Trade-Union Council on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and on the Protection of Mothers and Children. This Commission participates in the formulation and review of proposals and recommendations designed to bring about improvements in the living, working and leisure-time conditions of women and in the protection of mothers and children. There are similar commissions operating under all the councils and trade-union committees.

The material and legal guarantees of the equality of women in the Byelorussian SSR are being constantly expanded.

During the period 1981-1985, the global social product in the BSSR increased by 26.5 per cent, and the national income by 32.5 per cent instead of the 23.3 per cent foreseen under the plan (the average annual growth rate for national income was 5.8 per cent). As a result, real per capita income rose by 13 per cent, the average monthly wage of industrial and office workers by 15 per cent, and remuneration for the labour of collective farm workers by a factor of 1.5. There was a 26-per-cent increase in the social consumption funds, which in 1985 exceeded 5,000 million roubles. Residential housing with a total area of more than 23 million square metres was turned over for use, and additional hospitals, kindergartens and nurseries, cultural establishments and service enterprises were built. About 80 per cent of national income was directly channelled to the satisfaction of the requirements of the population. Payments and allowances financed out of the social consumption funds rose by more than 1,000 million roubles.

Measures aimed at further improving the living and working conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children are an integral part of the socio-economic development strategy for Soviet society put forward at the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In accordance with the Law on the State Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Byelorussian SSR for the Period 1986-1990, adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR on the basis of the decisions of the Thirtieth Congress of the Communist Party of Byelorussia, real per capita income is to increase by 14.5 per cent, the average monthly wage of industrial and office workers by 14.2 per cent, the pay of collective farm workers by 18.1 per cent, and the social consumption funds by 23 per cent. More than 420,000 flats will be built, the level of medical care will continue to rise, further additions will be made to the network of public health facilities, and social security coverage will be improved.

All these measures are intended to ensure a rational combination of public and family elements in the raising of children, an improvement in the situation of working mothers, a reduction in living standard disparities in families caused by the presence of children, and the creation of favourable living conditions for young families.

The women's councils have an important role to play in ensuring the successful application of the measures that have been planned. These councils have now been brought under a unified system within the Republic. On 20 January 1987, there was a republic-wide conference of women at which a Women's Council of the Byelorussian SSR, headed by Mrs. Nina Mazai, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR, was established.

PART II

Comments on the individual articles of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Comment on the second preambular paragraph of the Convention

The women of the Byelorussian SSR fully support the initiatives of the Soviet State on behalf of peace and, in particular, the Programme to secure the total and general elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, to free mankind of the threat of self-destruction, and to ensure the reliable security of the present and future generations, which is contained in the statement of 15 January 1986 by M. S. Gorbachev, Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Byelorussian women welcomed with deep satisfaction the decision of the Soviet Government to extend its moratorium on nuclear explosions until 1 January 1987 and, following that, until the first such explosion carried out by the United States of America.

The women of the BSSR are actively engaged in the mobilization of efforts for the maintenance of peace. They are participating in the work of the Byelorussian Committee for the Defence of Peace, the Byelorussian and other branches of the Soviet Peace Foundation, and the regional Committees for the Defence of Peace. Of the 135 members of the Byelorussian Committee for the Defence of Peace, 53 are women, and there are three women in the Committee's 11-member presidium. Women are performing an active role in the work of the Soviet Peace Foundation, specifically in its Byelorussian Branch, of whose various commissions 45 per cent of the members are women.

During the period beginning in 1981, the Republic has been the scene of a number of major events that were conducted under the general theme of strengthening peace and involved the participation of large numbers of women. These included:

- May 1981: "Peace March" in the city of Vitebsk, involving the participation of 10,000 persons;

- July 1982: "Peace March 82", organized on the initiative of the women's peace-campaigner organizations of the Scandinavian countries, the Soviet Committee for the Defence of Peace and the Committee of Soviet Women, along the itinerary Stockholm-Helsinki-Leningrad-Moscow-Minsk. A total of 50,000 residents of Minsk, more than half of them women, took part;

- October 1983: A women's anti-war demonstration in the city of Minsk numbering 75,000 persons;

- May 1984: A women's anti-war demonstration in the city of Minsk numbering 100,000 persons;

- May 1984: A youth meeting of 5,000 persons under the slogan "Peace to the children of the planet say the children of war";

- October 1984: An anti-war demonstration and meeting of student youth numbering 50,000 persons;

- May 1985: A meeting of 60,000 persons in the hero-fortress of Brest, involving the participation of peace envoys from the Polish People's Republic and the German Democratic Republic; a demonstration and meeting of 100,000 persons in the city of Minsk;

- October 1985: A "Peace March" of 50,000 persons during the Disarmament Week of Action in the city of Vitebsk; anti-war demonstrations by 30,000 persons in Mogilev and Grodno; and anti-war demonstrations and meetings numbering 10,000 persons in Soligorsk, Borisovo, Molodechno and Mozyr.

The period from 7 to 13 May 1986 was proclaimed by the World Peace Council as a "Week of Action for Security and Co-operation in Europe", and to mark this event mass meetings were held in each district of the city of Minsk. At these meetings, resolutions were adopted and forwarded to United Nations headquarters. The City of Vitebsk was the scene of a demonstration and meeting that brought together 50,000 persons and at which the text of a letter to the United States Government calling on it to join the Soviet nuclear explosion moratorium was adopted.

On 1 September 1986, a demonstration and meeting took place in the city of Brest in support of the peaceful initiatives of the USSR. More than 40,000 workers of that city together with 160 representatives of the All-Poland Peace Committee took part in those events.

Women accounted for about 50 per cent of the participants in the above-mentioned activities. They also played an active role in a number of international meetings of peace supporters, several of which took place in the Byelorussian SSR.

The Byelorussian Committee for the Defence of Peace maintains contacts with such women's anti-war organizations as "Mothers for Peace" in Great Britain and the United States and "Grandmothers for Peace" in the United States. In all, contacts have been established with 36 organizations based in Great Britain, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and other foreign countries. The Committee annually receives from 50 to 70 foreign delegations and tourist groups. Byelorussian women have travelled abroad at the invitation of international and national organizations of peace campaigners. Women hold positions in the delegations of the BSSR to the General Assembly of the United Nations and to many other international organizations and their subordinate bodies.

Comment on Article 2

The equality of the rights of women and men in the Byelorussian SSR was established in the first Constitution of the BSSR, adopted in 1919. This equality is also guaranteed under the Constitution of the Republic currently in force, which was adopted in 1978 and which, in particular, contains the following provisions:

"Article 32. Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are equal before the law regardless of their origin, racial and national affiliation, sex, education, language, attitude towards religion, the nature of their occupation, their place of residence and other circumstances.

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are assured equal rights in all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life."

"Article 33. Women and men in the Byelorussian SSR enjoy equal rights.

"The implementation of these rights is ensured by granting women opportunities equal to those of men for acquiring education and vocational training and in the

areas of employment, remuneration for work and professional advancement, as well as in social, political and cultural activities, and also by special measures to provide safe working conditions for women and to protect their health; through the creation of conditions to enable women to combine work with maternity; and through the legal protection of mothers and children and their material and moral support, including the granting of paid leave and other special benefits to pregnant women and mothers and the gradual reduction of the working day for women with young children."

The equality of all citizens before the law and the courts is asserted in article 9 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Byelorussian SSR (adopted at the fourth session of the fifth convocation of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR on 29 December 1960), which states:

"Justice in criminal cases is administered in accordance with the principle of the equality of citizens before the law and the courts, regardless of their origin, social and property status, racial and national affiliation, sex, education, language, attitude towards religion, the nature of their occupation, place of residence and other circumstances."

Any manifestations of discrimination against women are subject to the punishments provided for, specifically, in Chapter 9 of the Criminal Code of the Byelorussian SSR "Crimes against the political, work-related and other rights of citizens". These include the punishments contemplated for the illegal dismissal of a woman for personal reasons, for example, because of her unwillingness to cohabit (articles 116 and 134), and for the refusal to hire a pregnant woman or nursing mother or for dismissing her on these grounds (article 136).

The Soviet legislation of the Byelorussian SSR and the practices that have been developed in its application reliably guarantee equal and just treatment even for women offenders.

A number of articles of the Criminal Code (CC) of the BSSR and of the Correctional Labour Code (CLC) of the BSSR, and also the provisions regarding preliminary guarded confinement in the Byelorussian SSR, establish special, privileged and less severe conditions for the serving of sentences by women sentenced to the loss of liberty than the régime stipulated for men. According to article 37 of the CC of the BSSR, the fact that a woman was pregnant at the time she committed a crime is regarded as an extenuating circumstance.

Convicted women who display a conscientious attitude towards their work and observe the rules governing their confinement may be allowed to reside outside the correctional colony during the time they are released from work for reasons of pregnancy and maternity and also until the child completes its second year (article 33 of the CLC of the BSSR). In such cases, the convicted women are settled near the territory of the colony and are kept under supervision. They may wear normal civilian clothing; carry money on their persons and make unrestricted use of it; mail letters; receive printed matter, packages and money orders; arrange meetings without restrictions; etc.

The personnel and administrative staff of the correctional labour colonies for convicted women consist in the main of female persons.

The legislation in effect in the Byelorussian SSR effectively guarantees the rights of women. All assaults on their honour and dignity are prosecuted under the law. There is provision for criminal responsibility for such offences as rape, illegal abortion under conditions posing a threat to the health of the woman, malicious refusal to make child-support payments, the keeping of dens of vice and the practice of pandering for personal profit, the act of coercing a woman into marriage or of preventing her from marrying, bigamy or polygamy, etc.

Article 3

The provisions of this article are addressed in the comments on the relevant articles of the Convention.

Comment on article 4

In seeking solutions to the problem complex "working women - maternity - child-rearing", account is taken of those socio-economic and psycho-physiological characteristics of women that make it necessary to apply a special approach to the employment of female labour. These characteristics require, in the first place, work of an appropriate content to be performed under appropriate conditions and, secondly, a special working régime to enable the woman to combine rationally her working career with motherhood and other family roles.

Working women enjoy many privileges under their social insurance benefits, which are provided and paid for by the State.

A series of measures has been devised and implemented in Byelorussia for the purpose of improving the working conditions of women in accordance with the government and trade-union decree "On the introduction of new standards for maximum permissible loads for women in the manual lifting and moving of heavy objects", adopted in 1981, and also with the decree "On standards for maximum permissible loads for women in the manual lifting and moving of heavy objects", adopted in 1982. These legal documents forbid the use of female labour in operations that are particularly strenuous or harmful to the health of women at heavy-industry enterprises and also in underground work. The general provisions have been made more specific by the adoption of a special List of production processes, occupations and operations for which the use of female labour is banned, including such occupations as bulldozer operator, driver of trucks with a cargo-carrying capacity of over 2.5 tons, welder, worker engaged in the performance of operations involving the use of toxic substances, etc. Women may not be used for carrying heavy objects exceeding the established weight limits.

The Byelorussian SSR is a party to a number of International Labour Organisation conventions regarding safeguards in the employment of women, in particular the Convention concerning the Employment of Women in Underground Work in Mines of All Kinds.

Comment on article 5

The legislation of the Byelorussian SSR is based on the principle of the full equality of women and men in all areas of political, social, economic and cultural life. The aim of this legislation is to achieve the total eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customs rooted in the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes. The Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR contains a statement to the effect that one of its tasks is the elimination of harmful vestiges and customs of the past in family relations.

An important role in the ultimate dismantling of obsolete stereotypes regarding the role of women within the family belongs to the mass media. The problems that may arise in this connection are discussed in regular radio and television programmes ("Alesja", "Podruga", "Semja"). These problems also receive particular attention in the special magazine for women Rabotnitsa i sjaljanka ["The Working and the Rural Woman"], in addition to which sections dealing with the same subjects have appeared in many periodical publications. In bringing these issues to the attention of the public, the emphasis is on increasing the volume of information and improving its quality and on rendering the work of the mass media more effective in organizational terms.

The educational system, beginning with kindergarten and extending through the higher institute of learning, also has an important function to play in inculcating a sense of respect for women and in fostering recognition of the equality of their role in all walks of life, including the area of family and marital relationships. Since 1983, the secondary schools have included in their curricula a special two-year course on "Ethics and the Psychology of Family Life". As accompanying materials, a number of textbooks for students and methodological aids for teachers have been prepared.

In accordance with the legislation on the family and marriage, questions pertaining to the raising of children are resolved jointly by the spouses (articles 20 and 65 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR). The father and mother have equal rights and duties in respect of their children. This principle continues to apply to parents even in the event that their marriage has been dissolved (article 64 of the Code).

The law requires parents, in raising their children, to show concern for their physical development, studies and preparation for a socially useful occupation. It also contains a direct assertion to the effect that parental rights may not be exercised in a manner contrary to the interests of the children (article 62).

Comment on article 6

The nature of the socialist system excludes the pre-conditions for traffic in women and the exploitation of the prostitution of women.

The Byelorussian SSR is a party to the following international conventions: the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Minor Age, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the Slavery Convention, and the Supplemental Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery.

The legislation of the Byelorussian SSR provides for a whole range of measures aimed at preventing the abuse of women. Articles 115, 116 and 117 of the Criminal Code of the BSSR contain clearly defined standard punishments for rape, the coercion of women into sexual intercourse, and carnal knowledge of a person who has not yet attained sexual maturity.

Comment on article 7

The policy objective of the Soviet State is to encourage the full involvement of women in political and public life. Women's right to participate on an equal footing with men in the direct management of the affairs of State is guaranteed under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR and, in particular, under article 46, which states:

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have the right to participate in the management of State and public affairs and in the discussion and adoption of laws and decisions of national and local significance.

"This right is ensured by the possibility of voting and being elected to the Councils of the People's Deputies and other elected governmental bodies and of participating in nation-wide discussions and votes, in the exercise of people's control, in the work of State agencies, public organizations and voluntary non-governmental bodies, and in meetings organized by working collectives and at the individual's place of residence."

The right of women to vote in all elections had already been established under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR adopted in 1919. Article 85 of the Byelorussian Constitution currently in force and adopted in 1978 states: "Elections of deputies are general elections: all citizens of the Byelorussian SSR who have reached their eighteenth year have the right to vote and to be elected, with the exception of persons who have been legally declared insane."

Nearly all women who have reached their eighteenth year take part in the elections. Like men, women who live in remote communities where there are no polling places are provided with transport to bring them to where they can cast their ballot. In the case of persons who, because of the state of their health or for other reasons, are unable to present themselves personally at the polling place, the ballot box is brought to where they are located. No separate statistics are kept in the Byelorussian Republic on the percentage of women voters, but some indication of the scale of voter participation can be seen in the fact that 99.99 per cent of all persons eligible to vote did so in the 1985 elections to the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR and to the local Councils of the People's Deputies. A total of 180 women, or 37.1 per cent of all the deputies, were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR, while 42,673 women, or 49.9 per cent of all deputies, were elected to the local Councils of the People's Deputies.

Women deputies participate in the discussion of proposed legislation, in the adoption of laws, in the approval of the economic and social development plans and of the State budget, and in the decision-making process, including that relating to the most vital issues of domestic and foreign policy. Women are members of the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR and of the commissions of the local Councils of the People's Deputies.

On 9 April 1981, the Government adopted the Decree on the Standing Commissions of the Local Councils of the People's Deputies of the Byelorussian SSR, laying down the basic principles for the organization and activities of these commissions and their formation. These bodies include commissions directly concerned with problems pertaining to the working and living conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children (article 14); commissions on health care and social security (article 19); and commissions on housing, town planning and municipal services and amenities (article 21).

July 1986 saw the adoption of a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on measures to further enhance the role and strengthen the responsibility of the Councils of the People's Deputies for an acceleration of socio-economic development. This decree provided, in particular, for a higher degree of responsibility on the part of the Councils for meeting the needs of the public in the areas of housing, social and cultural facilities and amenity services.

Women are playing an active role in the work of the trade unions. In 1985, 117,500 women (60.2 per cent of the total number of persons elected) were selected to serve as chairmen of enterprise trade-union committees and trade-union organizations; 97 women (50.5 per cent) were elected to the management bodies of the Byelorussian Republic Trade-Union Council; 427 women (53.3 per cent) to similar posts within the regional councils; and 1,064 women (52.1 per cent) to higher-level positions on the republic-wide branch trade-union committees. Many branch trade-union committees are headed by women.

Women are extensively represented in the elected bodies of the Communist Party of Byelorussia, including the Central Committee. In addition, they hold senior positions as enterprise and organization heads, judges, public procurators, State farm directors and principals of eight-year and secondary schools. The Deputy

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR are women, as are also two ministers and two deputy ministers. All told, women account for 64 per cent of the personnel of the agencies of State government and economic administration and of the bodies with responsibility for managing the activities of the co-operative and public organizations.

On 9 April 1981, a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, approving the Statute on citizens' meetings according to their place of residence and on the establishment of community (village, street, district and house) committees in the Byelorussian SSR. The Statute confirms that the institution of the residents' meeting provides a forum for the direct participation of the population in the management of State and public affairs and in the adoption of decisions regarding matters with local and State-wide implications, including questions pertaining to the work of the educational, cultural and health-care institutions, the sport facilities, the retail trade enterprises, the public dining establishments and the amenity services. The residents' meetings examine bills, other enactments of the highest organs of State authority and administration, and also decisions taken by the local Councils and submitted for public discussion, in addition to which they provide an opportunity for the participants to familiarize themselves with current legislation and with the most important rulings of the local Councils of the Peoples' Deputies and their executive organs. Further, the Statute defines the role of the village, street, district and house committees as instruments for voluntary community activity by the population with a view to promoting the development of useful and constructive initiatives on the part of the public and contributing to the broad-based involvement of the citizenry in the solution of work-related, economic and socio-cultural problems.

Comment on article 8

Women in the Byelorussian SSR are playing an active role in the work of international organizations. They participate on a permanent basis in the activities of the General Assembly of the United Nations and of its other bodies and specialized agencies. They are amply represented in the delegations sent abroad by State agencies and by the scientific, cultural and sporting organizations of the Republic.

Comment on article 9

In accordance with the legislation in effect in the Byelorussian SSR, marriage by a male or female citizen of the Byelorussian SSR with a foreign citizen or with a stateless person, and also the dissolution of such a marriage, has no effect on the citizenship of the spouses. In turn, the acquisition or loss of citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR and, in this way, of citizenship of the USSR by one of the spouses does not affect the citizenship of the other spouse.

The Byelorussian SSR is a party to the International Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.

Article 31 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, which is concerned with citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR and the equal rignts of citizens, makes it clear that every citizen of the Byelorussian SSR is a citizen of the USSR. The grounds and procedure for the acquisition or loss of Soviet citizenship are governed by the 1978 Law on Citizenship of the USSR. This law establishes that citizenship of the USSR may be acquired through birth, i.e., by virtue of the fact that a child is born of Soviet citizens (article 10, paragraph 1). A child both of whose parents held citizenship of the USSR at the time of its birth is a Soviet citizen, regardless of whether or not it was born within Soviet territory or outside it (article 11).

The law also sets forth the provisions for determining whether the child enjoys Soviet citizenship in cases when only one of its parents is a citizen of the USSR. Article 12 of the law specifies that when the parents, one of whom was a citizen of the USSR at the time of the child's birth, are of different citizenship, the child is a citizen of the USSR if: (1) it was born within the territory of the USSR, and (2) it was born outside the USSR, but its parents, or one of them, at that time had a permanent place of residence within the territory of the USSR. In the case of different citizenship on the part of the parents, one of whom at the time of the child's birth held Soviet citizenship, and if at that time both parents had a permanent place of residence outside of the USSR, the citizenship of a child born outside the USSR is determined with the joint consent of the parents.

In the event that one of the parents at the time of the child's birth was a citizen of the USSR while the other was stateless or unknown, the child is recognized as a citizen of the USSR regardless of where it was born (article 12 of the law). These provisions of the Law on Citizenship ensure that, as far as possible, the problem will be resolved in favour of recognizing the child as a Soviet citizen, and thus contribute to preventing cases of stateless children or, in any event, to reducing their number. When both parents are citizens of the same country, the question of the citizenship of the children is resolved according to the constitutional principle of the equality of rights of the woman and the man, i.e., the law excludes the possiblity of any preference being given to the citizenship of the child's father.

On 27 August 1981, the Government adopted a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR "On the procedure for admission to citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR", in accordance with which foreign citizens and stateless persons having a permanent residence within the territory of the Byelorussian SSR may, on their application and regardless of their racial or national affiliation, sex, education and language, be admitted to citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR and, ipso facto, to citizenship of the USSR.

Comment on article 10

The basic principles underlying the system of education in the Byelorussian SSR are laid down in article 43 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, which states:

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have the right to education.

"This right is secured: by the fact that all forms of education are free; by the existence of universal compulsory secondary education for young people; by the extensive development of vocational-technical, secondary specialized, and higher education based on the relevance of what is taught to life and economic activity; by the expansion of correspondence course and evening education; by the availability of State scholarships and benefits to students and other persons enrolled in educational programmes; by the free distribution of school textbooks; by the possibility of attending a school offering instruction in one's native language; and by the creation of appropriate conditions for self-education."

As a result of the practical implementation of the provisions of the Constitution, women have gained broad access to all forms of education. Thanks to their full social equality, the women of the Byelorussian SSR are able to acquire any profession or occupation that is in accordance with their inclinations, vocation or aptitude, as well as with the needs of society, but which does not involve working conditions of the kind that might be harmful to their health. In conformity with article 20 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR, marriage does not limit a woman in her selection of an occupation, profession or place of residence.

The most outstanding achievement in the area of education in recent times has been the introduction of general compulsory education. At present, 99.9 per cent of young men and women, following their completion of the eight-year school, go on to secondary education in the senior classes of the secondary general education schools and at the secondary technical trade schools and the secondary specialized institutions of learning. In 1984, the system of free textbooks for all students of general education schools was introduced.

Currently, there are 779,000 women specialists with higher and secondary specialized education employed in the national economy (as opposed to 663,000 in 1980). Women account for 55.4 per cent of the total number of specialists with higher education (54.5 per cent in 1980); the figures for specialists with secondary specialized education are 65.2 and 64.5 per cent, respectively. This ratio is predetermined by the composition of the student body: more than half of the enrolment (55 per cent at the higher educational institutions and 59 per cent at the secondary specialized colleges) are girls. Women display the greatest interest in occupations in the areas of economics and law (77 per cent of the students); education, art and cinematography (73 per cent); and health care, physical culture and sport (55 per cent). The proportion of women in the total number of scientific workers is increasing and currently stands at 40 per cent. During the 1985-1986 academic year, 3,847,000 persons were enrolled in one or another form of education in the Byelorussian SSR (3,627,000 during the 1980-1981 academic year), 161,000 persons were registered at the industrial trade schools (150,000 during the 1980-1981 academic year), and 182,000 were pursuing studies at higher educational establishments (177,000 during the 1980-1981 academic year).

For the period 1986-1990, there are plans to build schools to accommodate 272,000 students. During this same period the Republic's higher institutions of learning will provide training for more than 150,000 persons, and the technical colleges for over 200,000 specialists.

On 20 June 1984, the Government adopted a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR "On measures to implement the decisions of the April (1984) Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the first session of the eleventh convocation of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the basic areas in the reform of the general education and vocational school system". In accordance with this decree, the purpose of the reform is to elevate the work of the general education and vocational school system to a qualitatively new level. The measures envisaged provide, in particular, for a further expansion of vocational training for girls; for the more complete satisfaction of the needs of the urban and rural population for children's pre-school centres, with particular attention to be given to cities with a high level of economically active women; for the more extensive use for these purposes of the possibilities of building kindergartens and nurseries, and for the introduction in rural localities of teaching and educational establishments of the new "School - Kindergarten" type.

During the current five-year period the essential work in the task of providing the population with pre-school establishments is to be completed. In this connection, there are plans to build kindergartens to accommodate 160,000 children.

On 13 February 1984, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted under the title "On general-education boarding schools, kindergartens and other boarding establishments". Pursuant to this decree, additional measures are to be taken so as to make further improvements in the work of the general-education boarding schools, kindergartens and other boarding establishments and to ensure that they provide the necessary conditions for the teaching, education and medical care of their children.

Comment on article 11

There is no discrimination of any kind in the Byelorussian SSR against women in the area of employment. The principle of the equal rights of women and men is secured through a number of material and legal guarantees. These are laid down in the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR and include the right to work, the right to a State-guaranteed wage commensurate with the quantity and quality of the labour performed (article 38), the right to rest (article 39), the right to healthy and safe working conditions (article 40), the right to free vocational training and the upgrading of job qualifications (article 38), and the right to material security in old age, in the event of illness and following the loss of the ability to work (article 41). Women's right to equal opportunities at the work-place and in respect of equal pay and professional advancement is asserted in article 33 of the Constitution, in accordance with which "women and men in the Byelorussian SSR enjoy equal rights".

The overwhelming majority of the able-bodied female population of the Byelorussian SSR (about 93 per cent) participate in some form of economic activity. Women account for 53 per cent of the total number of workers. Working women represent a large proportion of the persons employed in education (75 per cent), in public health and physical training (82 per cent), in trade, public dining, credit operations and State insurance (85 per cent), in the cultural area (77 per cent), in the agencies of State government and economic administration and in bodies with responsiblity for managing the activities of co-operative and public organizations (66 per cent), and in science and the scientific support sector (55 per cent).

A direct consequence of the progress achieved in the area of science and technology may be seen in the fact that industry has become the leading area of employment for women. The largest number of women are employed in the precision engineering and radio industries, where they account for 65-67 per cent of the total work-force.

Measures to ensure the necessary working conditions for women are written into the collective contracts that govern the work of enterprise personnel and that include a special section entitled "Working and living conditions for women workers and the provision of assistance for the raising of children". The measures adopted at the national level in this connection have been mentioned in the comment on article 4 of the Convention.

A subject of great attention in the Republic is the improvement of women's qualifications. Efforts in this direction are facilitated by the fact that not only do women enjoy the same opportunities as men for acquiring education and the same access to the graduated skill-improvement programme, but there has also been instituted for them a preferential system of vocational training and retraining.

In 1985, the number of active members of the scientific and technical societies (NTO) in the Republic totalled 550,700 persons, of whom 253,300 were women. More than 150,000 women have distinguished themselves through their rationalization proposals and inventions.

In accordance with Byelorussian labour legislation, women may not be arbitrarily refused employment nor may their wages be lowered for reasons connected with the fact that they are pregnant or nursing a child. The dismissal, at the initiative of the management, of pregnant women, nursing mothers and women with children of up to one year of age is not permitted, except in cases involving the total liquidation of the institution, enterprise or organization, in which event dismissal, although permitted, must be accompanied by job-placement in another position.

Working women enjoy many privileges under their social insurance benefits, which are provided and paid for by the State. Social insurance funds are used to pay working women benefits for the temporary loss of the ability to work, for pregnancy and maternity, for the birth of a child, for the care of sick children, for old-age and disability pensions, for the loss of a breadwinner, and also to authorize their accommodation at sanatoria and rest homes or, in the case of their children, at pioneer camps.

On 17 December 1982, the Government adopted a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR amending and supplementing the Code of Labour Laws of the Byelorussian SSR. For example, article 167 was supplemented, to make it possible for a woman, at her request, and following paid pregnancy and maternity leave in the amount of 56 days prior to the birth and 56 days following it (70 days in the case of an abnormal birth or the birth of two or more children), to be granted partially paid child-care leave until the child completes its first year, during which time an allowance is to be paid as a State social insurance benefit. In addition, she may also be granted, at her request, additional unpaid leave for the care of her child during its first 18 months of life. A change was made in the wording of article 168, increasing the partially paid and unpaid periods of leave for women who have adopted children of up to 18 months of age. In accordance with the amendments, the decree provides for new forms of State social insurance benefits for women in connection with child care up to the first year of age.

Comment on article 12

In the Byelorussian SSR, safeguarding the health of the population is one of the Government's primary social tasks. The Constitution of the BSSR provides for the operation and expansion of the State health-care system (article 24) and also establishes the citizens' right to health-care services (article 40). This last-mentioned article states:

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have a right to the protection of their health. This right is secured: through free and qualified medical care dispensed at State-operated health care institutions; through the expansion of the network of treatment and health-enhancement centres; through the further development and improvement of industrial safety engineering and sanitation; through the implementation of broad-based preventive programmes; through measures designed to ensure a healthy environment; through special concern for the health of the younger generation, including a ban on any form of child labour not connected with training and instruction for work; and through scientific research aimed at reducing and preventing morbidity and ensuring long and active lives for all citizens."

The guarantees provided under the Constitution are based on constant improvements in the work of the entire medical care system.

On 3 June 1982, a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted "On the implementation of the Law of the BSSR on Health Care and on Measures to Further Improve the Protection of Health", in which there is provision, specifically, for the introduction of more effective forms and methods of health-enhancing, therapeutic and preventive medical care for women and children; for the building of additional children's hospitals, clinics, and consultation offices for women and children; for the prohibition of the employment of women in occupations that are unusually strenuous or harmful to their health; and for the further expansion (with construction improvements) of the network of children's pre-school establishments and their summer country villas, pioneer camps and children's sanatoria.

At present there are 880 hospital facilities in the Republic, as opposed to 873 in 1980. In 1985, for every 10,000 inhabitants there were 129.6 hospital beds (125.2 in 1980). The number of medical establishments providing out-patient clinical services to the public increased in 1985 to 1,352 (1,319 in 1980), the number of pregnancy and maternity beds to 7,468 (7,269 in 1980), and the number of women's consultation offices, children's clinics and out-patient centres to 673 (623 in 1980). During that same year of 1985, for every 10,000 inhabitants there were 37.3 doctors (33.9 in 1980).

Mother and child care in the Byelorussian SSR is provided by an extensive network of general medical facilities (including treatment and prevention) for women and children, and involves measures to protect working women on the job. Other aspects of this system are: the availability of social assistance for mothers and children; free medical attention for mothers and children; and the payment of pregnancy and maternity benefits, allowances for the medical treatment of children, and aid to single mothers and mothers with large families. The mother and child care establishments operate according to the clinical examination and treatment method. Special preventive-medicine and infertility-treatment sections have been established at the women's consultation offices. Pregnant women are kept under systematic observation and receive home care. In-patient maternity assistance is available in the cities and rural areas to all women who are about to give birth or who have recently been confined. No hiring obstacles may be placed in the way of pregnant women or nursing mothers. In accordance with the Republic's criminal legislation, officials found guilty of refusing to hire a pregnant women or nursing mother are liable to punishment in the form of correctional labour for a period of up to one year or of dismissal from their position (article 136 of the Criminal Code of the Byelorussian SSR). The law also establishes a special working-day régime for working mothers and women with children of up to one year of age. In addition to their general rest and meal-time break, these women are granted additional interruptions in their working day for the purpose of nursing their children. Breaks of this kind, which must be of not less than 30 minutes' duration each, are to be granted no less frequently than every three hours. In order to lighten the working conditions of pregnant women and nursing mothers, and also of women with children of up to one year of age, they may not be employed for night work, for overtime work or for work on what are normally non-working days, nor may they be sent on mission.

In June 1984, the State Committee on Labour and Social Affairs of the USSR and the All-Union Trade-Union Council adopted a resolution approving the "Rules on the system and conditions for the application of sliding (flexible) working hours for women with children".

In the Byelorussian SSR there are no limits on the right to motherhood or on family size. Family planning, including the decision as to the number of children, is left to the husband and wife alone. Abortion is legal. The public has unimpeded access to contraceptive devices. At the same time, maternity is encouraged through material and moral incentives of all kinds. The honorary title "Heroine Mother" and the decorations "Maternal Glory" and "Motherhood Medal" have been introduced. Mothers with numerous children are eligible for a whole range of allowances and special benefits, including a lower pensionable age.

Comment on article 13

Working women enjoy a number of privileges under the social insurance system, which is financed by the State.

Social insurance funds are used to pay working women benefits for the temporary loss of the ability to work, for pregnancy and maternity, for the birth

of a child, for the care of sick children, for old-age and disability pensions, for the loss of a breadwinner, and also for travel passes to sanatoria and rest homes and, in the case of their children, to pioneer camps.

In recent years these special benefits have been considerably expanded under decrees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia and of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR.

On 15 May 1981, a decree was adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia and the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR, entitled "On measures to provide greater State aid to families with children". This decree provides, in particular, for the following measures: the expansion of the system of kindergartens and nurseries, extended-day schools and groups, pioneer camps and other children's establishments; the extensive introduction of the practice of part-time work (with a shorter day or shorter week) for women and of the flexible hour system; improvements in the job conditions of working women, including a speed-up in the rate at which they are being released from strenuous and other unhealthy forms of work, and also a significant reduction in the number of women working night shifts; measures to improve the living conditions of families with children and of newly married couples; greater opportunities for family rest and relaxation; further improvements in the quality of medical care for women and children and in the work of the women's consultation offices, children's clinics, and midwifery and gynaecological establishments; improvements in the quality of the clinical monitoring of pregnant women and children; increased attention to the problems of improving mother and child care, strengthening marital and family relations and raising children; the introduction of better and more effective methods for propagandizing among the public a view of the family as one of the important moral assets of the socialist society; greater attention to the task of enhancing the prestige of motherhood; the creation of an atmosphere conducive to greater concern and respect for the family on the part of the public, and the introduction of methods to permit sound family rest and relaxation; and stepped-up work among young people to propagandize the socialist way of life and to inculcate a sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the family and society, and a respectful attitude towards children, women and mothers, and elderly persons.

In 1985, working women received 49.1 million roubles in the form of child-care benefits for children of up to one year of age. A one-time benefit was introduced for working women on the birth of a child, and also for women pursuing full-time studies; in 1985, a total of 10.7 million roubles was spent for benefits of this kind. Since 1 December 1981, monthly State allowances have been paid to single mothers for each child. At the same time, the eligibility age limit for children's allowances has been raised from 12 to 16 years (18 years in the case of students).

Since 1981, women with two or more children of up to 12 years of age have been eligible for a supplemental three-day period of child-care leave, which may be extended, unpaid, to two weeks.

On 14 August 1985, the Government adopted a decree of the Council of Ministers of the BSSR "On measures for the construction of co-operative residential houses for young people", which provides, in particular, for specific preferential loan-repayment terms for young married couples.

A subject of great attention in the Byelorussian SSR is the creation for the public, including women, of the necessary conditions for engaging in physical culture and sport. At present there are 159 large stadia and 16,000 football fields and sporting grounds in the Republic. In 1985, 3.3 million persons regularly participated in physical culture and sport (1.9 million in 1980), of whom about 40 per cent were women.

In 1985, some 80,000 persons spent time relaxing at rest homes and boarding houses, some 50,000 persons at leisure-time centres, and a total of 1,696,000 persons at holiday and tourist facilities. During that same year the Byelorussian tourist establishments of the trade unions alone catered to 508,000 tourists and 8.1 million holidaymakers; of this number, women accounted for more than 70 per cent. Also in 1985, there were 6,373 club-type establishments in the Republic (6,311 in 1980).

Comment on article 14

In the Byelorussian SSR rural women enjoy all the rights contemplated in the Constitution of the BSSR and all the privileges and advantages provided for under Soviet legislation. They fully exercise their right to education and vocational training, to the free selection of a profession or occupation, and to equal pay for equal work.

The level of development of agricultural production in the Republic is intimately linked to the work of agricultural specialists. At present, women account for about 40 per cent of the agricultural specialists with higher education employed in production-related positions, and for more than 53 per cent of those with secondary specialized education. Currently, agricultural specialists with higher and intermediate qualifications, including women, are trained at four advanced and 27 secondary-level specialized training establishments in the Republic. Particular attention is focused on the training of key personnel for the occupations in greatest demand: mechanical milking operators, cattle raising and fattening operators, fodder preparation operators, etc. In 1983, the number of women undergoing training for these and other occupations increased by a factor of 3.4 in comparison with the 1976 figure. All women wishing to work in agriculture are provided with employment. They represent about one half of all collective farm members.

In recent years a number of measures have been adopted to further improve the working and living conditions of women, to better safeguard their health and protect them on the job, and to introduce additional special benefits and forms of social assistance for working women, including those with children. The mechanization of such operations as the cultivation and harvesting of cereal and silo crops and the planting and field care of potatoes has been completed. A high level of mechanization has been achieved in the harvesting of potatoes and flax and in the application of mineral fertilizers. This has made it possible to lighten the labour of more than 70,000 women engaged in agricultural production. Women equipment operators are being provided with agricultural machines of the latest design. The output standards for women equipment operators are 10 per cent lower than for their male counterparts, and the six additional days of leave in effect for male operators are being increased to 12 working days for women operators. Eligibility for old-age pensions on preferential terms begins in the case of women with the completion of 50 years of age and after 15 years of service.

For the purpose of preventing occupational diseases, preventive clinics offering specialized procedures are being set up at agricultural production sites.

The collective farms operate according to a system combining a guaranteed monetary remuneration for labour with additional payments as premiums for exceeding the planned average per-hectare yield or, in the case of stock raising, the planned productivity. Rising labour productivity is bringing about a steady improvement in the living standards of the rural population, with the way of life of women in the countryside coming increasingly to resemble that of women employed in the industrial sector. During the period from 1981 to 1985 there was a 1.5-fold increase in the wages earned by collective farm workers; this remuneration is to rise by an additional 17-19 per cent during the next five-year period.

Women in rural areas enjoy the same privileges as the remaining female population of the Republic. There is provision in their case too for children's allowances, special benefits for pregnant and nursing mothers, and for the granting of paid and unpaid leave for pregnancy, maternity and the care of sick children. In addition, rural women are also covered by the legislative provisions banning the employment of women in occupations involving strenuous and, for them, harmful working conditions. The outlays for pensions and allowances as well as for the education and health care of the rural population are financed out of the State budget and the centralized social insurance fund for collective farm members.

During the period from 1981 to 1985, the budget of the State social insurance system and of the centralized social insurance fund for collective farm workers in the Byelorussian SSR increased from 504.9 million roubles to 837.2 million roubles.

In 1980, there was a 40-per-cent increase in minimum pension benefits for women collective farm workers. Since 1985, there have been increases for collective farm members in minimum pension entitlements for old age, disability and the loss of a breadwinner, and pension payment levels set more than 10 years ago have been raised. Moreover, additional benefits have been introduced, and measures have been taken to increase the number of boarding homes for pensioners and disabled persons in rural localities.

On 5 May 1981, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, entitled "On supplemental local tax benefits". This decree provides, in particular, for exemption from the building owners' tax and land tax for citizens of 60 years of age and older in the case of men and 55 years of age and older in the case of women, when they have no sources of income other than the income received from their personal subsidiary agricultural plot.

During the period 1986-1990, residential housing with a total area of 11,180,000 square metres will be built in rural areas, which is 1.5 times more than during the preceding five-year period. In addition, the system of children's pre-school establishments will be enlarged so as to accommodate an additional 87,000 children.

The economic activity of rural women is combined with a high level of public and political activity. These women are represented in the Councils of the People's Deputies, including the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR. Women are elected to leadership positions in Party, Communist Youth League (Komsomol) and trade-union organizations, and can be found as chairmen of collective and State farms and as members and directors of consumer co-operative organizations.

Comment on article 15

The Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR specifies that all citizens of the Republic, regardless of their sex and other circumstances, are equal before the law (article 32) and before the courts (article 155). The system of justice in the Republic is based on these principles. In addition, justice is administered only by a court in which the judges and the people's assessors (elected lay judges) are independent and subject to the law only.

In the Byelorussian SSR there is a system of bodies that monitor the observance of the constitutional rights of women. One of the key places in this system is reserved for the Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and on the Protection of Mothers and Children, which is vested with broad powers. In accordance with article 112 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, "All State and non-governmental public bodies, organizations and officials are obliged to carry out the requirements of

the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR. ... The recommendations of the commissions are subject to mandatory review by the State and public organs, institutions and organizations. The commissions must be notified within a specified period of the results of the review or of the measures taken".

Ultimate responsibility for supervising the strict and uniform observance of the laws, including those that guarantee the rights of both women and men, by all ministries and departments, enterprises and institutions, co-operative and public organizations and their officials within the territory of the Byelorussian SSR lies with the bureaux of the Office of the Public Procurator. The college of barristers is available to assist the citizens of the Republic in legal matters. An important role in ensuring compliance with women's rights is assigned to the trade unions, which, working through an extensive network of technical and legal inspectorates and special commissions, supervise and monitor the observance of the legislation on the employment of women.

As a result of all of these factors, the Byelorussian SSR has established a system for the legal protection of its citizens, including women, which rests on a basis of absolute equality.

Comment on article 16

Article 51 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR states:

"The family is under the protection of the State. Marriage is based on the voluntary consent of the woman and the man. The spouses enjoy totally equal rights in family relations.

"The State shows concern for the family through its creation and development of an extensive system of children's establishments, through the organization and improvement of amenity services and public dining facilities, through the payment of benefits on the birth of a child, by granting benefits and allowances to families with numerous children, and through other forms of family benefits and assistance as well."

The legislation lays down two major conditions for entering marriage: the mutual consent of the persons contracting the marriage, and their attainment of marriageable age (18 years). Failure to comply with either of these conditions will result in the recognition of the marriage as null and void.

The equality of the spouses' rights and duties in family relations is established under the law for all citizens of the Byelorussian SSR, as laid down in article 4 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR:

"All citizens enjoy equal rights in family relations.

"The law prohibits any direct or indirect limitation whatsoever of the rights of the spouses or the establishment of any direct or indirect advantages on entering into marriage and in the area of family relations by reason of origin, social and property status, sex, education, language, attitude towards religion, the nature of occupations, the place of residence and other circumstances."

In accordance with the marriage and family legislation of the Byelorussian SSR, the personal rights of the spouses, including the right to select a name when entering marriage, the right to the consensual settlement of matters pertaining to the raising of the children, and the right to the free selection of an occupation or profession and of the place of residence, are to be equally enjoyed by both spouses.

In cases when the further cohabitation of the spouses and the preservation of the family is impossible, the marriage is terminated through divorce (article 35 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR). A marriage may be dissolved in a civil registry office when both spouses are in agreement and there are no minor children, or in a court of law. Whereas the contraction of marriage requires as a necessary condition the consent of both parties entering into the marriage, divorce proceedings may, in accordance with the laws of the Republic, be initiated by either one of the spouses or by both; however, in the interests of the mother and the child, the law prohibits the dissolution of a marriage without the consent of the wife if she is pregnant or has a child of up to one year of age (article 33 of the Marriage and Family Code).

When dividing the goods that constitute the joint property of the marriage, the court always operates on the principle that both spouses are to receive an equal share. In individual cases, the court, taking into account the interests of minor children, may permit a departure from the principle of the equal sharing of the spouses in the disposition of the joint marital property (article 22 of the Marriage and Family Code). In accordance with the right established under article 43 of the Marriage and Family Code, that spouse who changed his or her name to another name at the time the marriage was contracted, may, after it has been dissolved, continue to use this name or, should she or he be unwilling to do so, may resume the use of the name by which she or he was called before the marriage. In ruling on the dissolution of a marriage, when there is a controversy between the spouses as to whom the children will live with after the marriage has been dissolved, and also as to which of the parents will be required to pay child support and in what amount, the court determines which of the children will be placed in the custody of which of the parents and also which of the parents will be required to pay child support and in what amount.

Parental rights may not be exercised in a manner contrary to the interests of the children. The interests of the children are to prevail in the settlement of any matter that concerns them, including the selection of the child's name and surname and the question of the manner in which a parent living apart from a child is to participate in raising it and in associating with it.

In recent years additional measures have been adopted to provide greater material support for children with parents who fail to comply with their maintenance obligations.

In February 1984, the Government adopted a decree of the Council of Ministers "On the introduction of temporary allowances for minor children for the period spent in searching for parents evading the payment of support". In accordance with this decree, the payment of allowances for minor children during the time spent in searching for parents who have failed to meet their support obligations is the responsibility of the social insurance authorities of the union republics. In this connection, a special account for the accumulation and allocation of funds for the payment of these allowances has been opened with the State Bank.

On 12 February 1985, a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR "On some changes in the procedure for exacting support payments for minor children" was adopted, which brought a simplification in the judicial proceedings for the recovery of support payments in favour of the female plaintiff and shortened the claim review period.

In accordance with the provisions of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR (articles 114 and 154), all citizens of the Republic of full age have the right to act as guardians, foster-parents and adoptive parents regardless of their sex, with the exception of persons who have been deprived of their parental rights or who have been declared in the manner prescribed by the law as lacking legal capacity or as having only limited capacity.

On 22 December 1983, the Housing Law of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, article 44 of which provides that housing is to be made available on a priority basis to persons with a need for improved housing conditions, specifically, mothers who have been awarded the title "Heroine Mother" or the decoration "Maternal Glory" or the medal "Motherhood Medal", families with numerous children, single mothers, and families following the birth of twins.

On 25 April 1984, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and the Byelorussian Republic Trade-Union Council was adopted, entitled "On the approval of the Rules for the recording of citizens requiring improved housing conditions and for the allocation of housing in the Byelorussian SSR". In accordance with these Rules, housing is made available on a priority basis, specifically, to mothers who have been awarded the title "Heroine Mother", the decoration "Maternal Glory", or the "Motherhood Medal"; to families with numerous children, including three or more minor or parentally dependent children; to single mothers; and to families into which twins have been born.

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As is evident from the the information presented in this report, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, is undeviatingly implementing all of its provisions.